

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION
Washington 25, D. C.

September 22, 1953

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION CIRCULAR NO. 74

TO: Heads of Federal Agencies

SUBJECT: Observance of Fire Prevention Week, October 4 - 10, 1953

1. General. This Circular directs attention of Federal agencies occupying space provided by the General Services Administration to the Proclamation by the President designating the week beginning October 4, 1953, as Fire Prevention Week.
2. The Proclamation:

"WHEREAS during the past year fire has taken the lives of some 10,000 of our people and has permanently maimed countless others; and

"WHEREAS the destruction of property by fire has risen to the highest peak in many years, resulting in a monetary loss of nearly a billion dollars; and

"WHEREAS the conservation of lives, property, and natural resources is a matter of the utmost importance to our Nation; and

"WHEREAS it has been abundantly demonstrated that fire losses can be substantially reduced wherever people are awakened to the danger:

"NOW, THEREFORE, I, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning October 4, 1953, as Fire Prevention Week.

"I earnestly request all our citizens, during that week, to initiate a year-round campaign in their homes and in their communities against the needless waste of life and property caused by destructive fires. I urge that State and local governments, the American National Red Cross, the National Fire Waste Council, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, and business, labor, and farm organizations, as well as schools, civic groups, and agencies of public information--including newspapers, magazines, and the radio, television, and motion picture industries--cooperate fully in the observance of Fire Prevention Week. I also direct the appropriate agencies of the Federal Government to assist in this crusade against the loss of life and property resulting from fires.

"IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States of America to be affixed.

"DONE at the City of Washington this 31st day of July in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and fifty-three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and seventy-eighth."

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

3. Responsibility. The Proclamation directs the appropriate agencies of the Federal Government to assist in this crusade against the loss of life and property resulting from fires. To carry out this responsibility a concerted and widespread effort to prevent fires must be made more vigorously than ever before in all Government establishments during the coming year. Fire Prevention Week provides a timely opportunity to stimulate year-round concerted action against the ever growing menace of fires. The Federal Government can ill afford needless loss of life and waste of millions of dollars in irreplaceable materials, facilities, and resources.
4. Elimination of Fire Hazards in Government Buildings. It is recommended that special surveys be made in all Government controlled buildings for the purpose of discovering, eliminating, or reporting existing fire hazards. It is important to establish and maintain good housekeeping conditions throughout all buildings. Particular attention should be given to improper disposal of smoking materials and to the hazard of smoking in areas where highly combustible materials are stored and where flammable liquids or gases are being stored or used. Current manufacturing and warehousing processes should be carefully reviewed from the standpoint of fire safety. Examination of store rooms, wastepaper packing rooms, shops, garages, laboratories, paint rooms, and other hazardous areas, is likely to disclose serious fire hazards which should be removed. Careful attention should be given to proper storage, use, and handling of flammable liquids and flammable gases. Flammable liquids should be kept to a minimum, handled in approved safety cans, and kept away from all sources of ignition.

Overloaded electrical circuits, faulty electrical wiring and equipment, and the improper use of electrical appliances should be given special attention. Electrical motors and other electrical equipment which require careful periodic maintenance should be carefully checked.

All means for preventing spread of fire vertically and horizontally in all buildings, to minimize fire damage, should be carefully inspected. Fire doors, fire shutters, etc., should be examined to make certain that they are in good working condition and not blocked open or obstructed. Blocking of fire exit stairways, corridors, and other means of egress should never be permitted.

Automatic sprinkler systems, control valves, and water supplies require constant attention. Fire extinguishers, standpipe systems, and other extinguishing devices are of equal importance. Fire alarm systems should be carefully inspected to make sure that the equipment is not obstructed. Your assistance in organizing and training of facility fire brigades for continuous protection is invited. Officials of the local public fire department are invited to inspect Government property, and a co-ordinated fire emergency plan of action should be worked out with the building superintendents.

Current plans for prompt and effective action when fires or other emergencies occur should be checked to make sure that your own plans are adequate and workable. All Federal employees should be instructed and trained in the action to be taken when a fire or other emergency occurs, especially in what they must do in their local building evacuation plan. They should likewise be instructed in the proper operation and use of fire alarm boxes and fire extinguishers located in their work areas.

5. Recommended Action. Prearranged plans for Fire Prevention Week should be carefully made and vigorously executed by all appropriate agencies of the Federal Government. Each agency is urged to bring forcibly to the attention of all employees the importance of fire prevention in Government buildings and in their homes, and to project Fire Prevention Week into a continuing crusade against destructive fires.



EDMUND F. MANSURE
Administrator